

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): ~~Method~~ A method of enhancing the at least one performance ~~properties~~ property of an aqueous polymer ~~dispersions~~ dispersion comprising at least one water-soluble ionic compound ~~compounds~~, which comprises removing at least 50 mol% of the at least one water-soluble ionic compound ~~compounds~~ from the polymer dispersion, and then adding at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~Method according to~~ The method of claim 1, wherein the aqueous polymer dispersion is obtained by emulsion polymerization.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 ~~Method according to one of claims 1 and 2~~, wherein the dispersed polymer in the polymer dispersion is a polymer ~~obtainable~~ obtained by free-radical addition polymerization which is synthesized from at least 60% by weight of ~~what are called~~ at least one principal ~~monomers~~ monomer selected from the group consisting of C₁ to C₂₀ alkyl (meth)acrylates, vinyl esters of carboxylic acids ~~containing~~ comprising up to 20 carbon atoms, vinylaromatics ~~having~~ comprising up to 20 carbon atoms, ethylenically unsaturated nitriles, vinyl halides, vinyl ethers of alcohols ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 10 carbon atoms, aliphatic hydrocarbons ~~having~~ comprising 2 to 8 carbon atoms and one or two double bonds, ~~[[or]]~~ and mixtures thereof ~~of these monomers~~.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): ~~Method according to one of claims 1 to 3~~ The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one water-soluble ionic compound ~~is an compounds~~ are ionic emulsifier ~~emulsifiers~~.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~Method~~ The method of claim 1 ~~according to one of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein at least 90 mol% of the at least one water-soluble ionic compound is ~~compounds are~~ removed.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~Method according to one of claims 1 to 5~~ The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one ionic ~~compounds are~~ compound is removed by treating the dispersion with an ion exchanger resin, by diafiltration or by dialysis.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 ~~Method according to one of claims 1 to 5~~, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 ~~Method according to one of claims 1 to 6~~, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is a dialkyl ester of sulfonated succinic acid.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1 ~~Method according to one of claims 1 to 8~~, wherein the at least one salt of a monoalkyl or dialkyl ester of a sulfonated dicarboxylic acid is added in an amount of from 0.01 to 5 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the dispersed polymer.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): An aqueous ~~Aqueous~~ polymer dispersion obtained by the method of claim 1 ~~dispersions obtainable by a method according to one of claims 1 to 9~~.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): An adhesive comprising the aqueous polymer dispersion of claim 10 and at least one additive ~~Use of the polymer dispersion according to claim 10 as an adhesive, especially pressure sensitive adhesive.~~

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A method of bonding two substrates, comprising bonding the two substrates with the adhesive of claim 11, ~~Use according to claim 11,~~ wherein at least one of the substrates to be bonded ~~using~~ with the adhesive is a transparent polymer film.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): ~~Use according to claim 12~~ The method of claim 12, wherein the transparent polymer film comprises a backing material, and wherein the adhesive is applied to [[a]] the transparent polymer film backing material.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): ~~Use according to claim 13~~ The method of claim 13, wherein the transparent polymer film is a PVC film ~~of PVC, especially plasticized PVC,~~ ~~polyethylene or polypropylene.~~

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A self-adhesive article comprising the adhesive of claim 11 ~~Self-adhesive articles obtainable with use according to one of claims 11 to 14.~~

Claim 16 (New): The aqueous polymer dispersion of claim 10, in the form of an adhesive.

Claim 17 (New): A method of bonding two substrates, comprising bonding the two substrates with the adhesive of claim 16, wherein at least one of the substrates to be bonded with the adhesive is a transparent polymer film.

Claim 18 (New): The method of claim 17, wherein the transparent polymer film comprises a backing material, and wherein the adhesive is applied to the transparent polymer film backing material.

Claim 19 (New): The method of claim 18, wherein the transparent polymer film is a PVC film.

Claim 20 (New): A self-adhesive article comprising the adhesive of claim 16.

Claim 21 (New): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by treating the dispersion with an ion exchanger resin.

Claim 22 (New): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by diafiltration.

Claim 23 (New): The method of claim 6, wherein the at least one ionic compound is removed by dialysis.